Headquarters U.S. Air Force

Integrity - Service - Excellence

Past Performance Training

For Air Force

Source Selections

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OUTLINE

- **Training Purpose**
- **Source Selection (SS) Team and SS Overall Process**
- **Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Air Force Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (AFFARS)**
- **Past Performance (PP) verses Responsibility Determination**
- **How Do You Do PP Evaluation?**
  - Early Activities
  - Prior to Issuance of Draft Request For Proposal (DRFP)/RFP
  - Prior to Proposal Receipt
  - After Receipt of Proposals
- **Performance Price Tradeoff (PPT) and Lowest Price Technically Acceptable (LPTA)**

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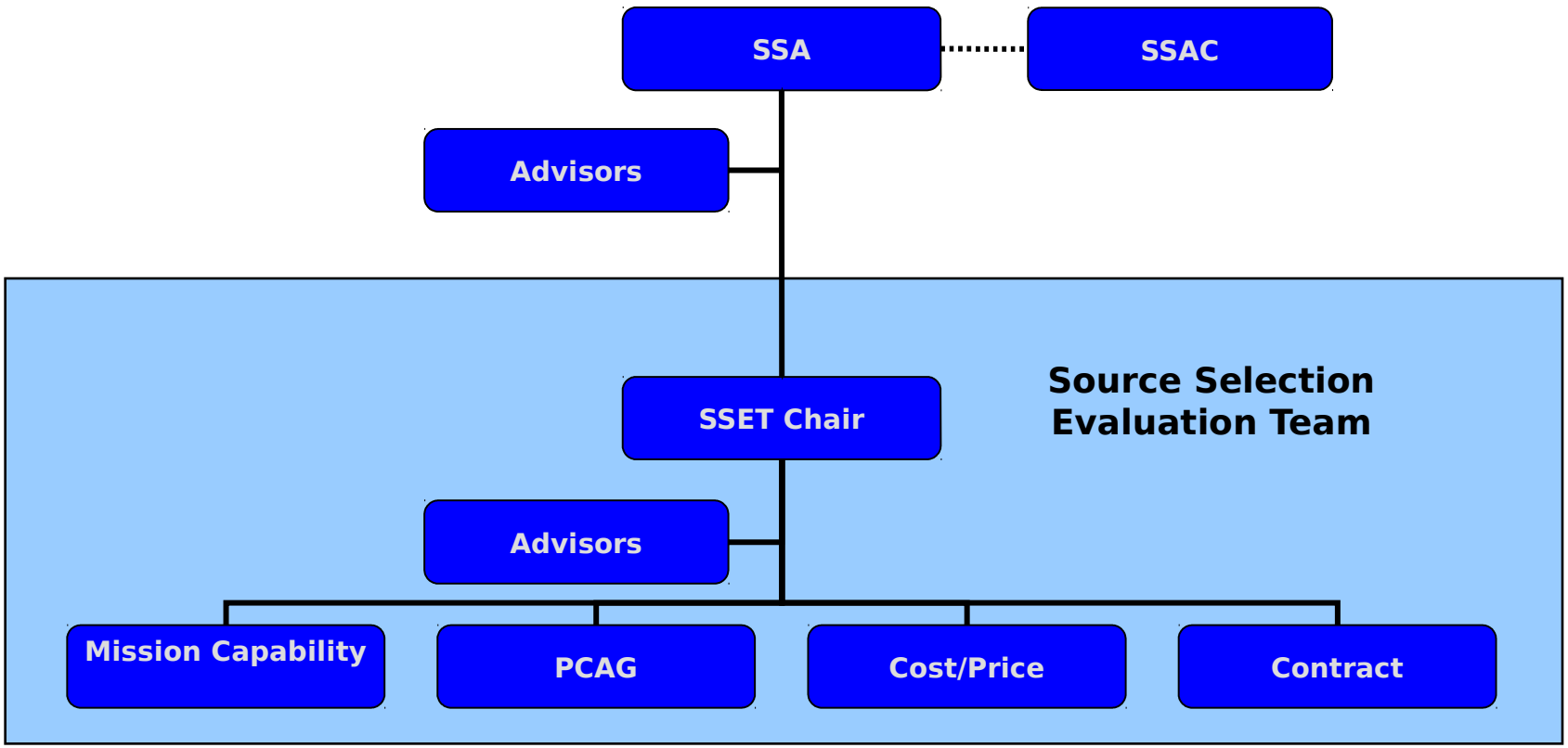
Training Purpose

Provide An Understanding of Past Performance Evaluation and the Process for Effectively Using It As An Evaluation Factor in "*Best Value*" Source Selections

Source Selection Organization



Source Selection Process Overview

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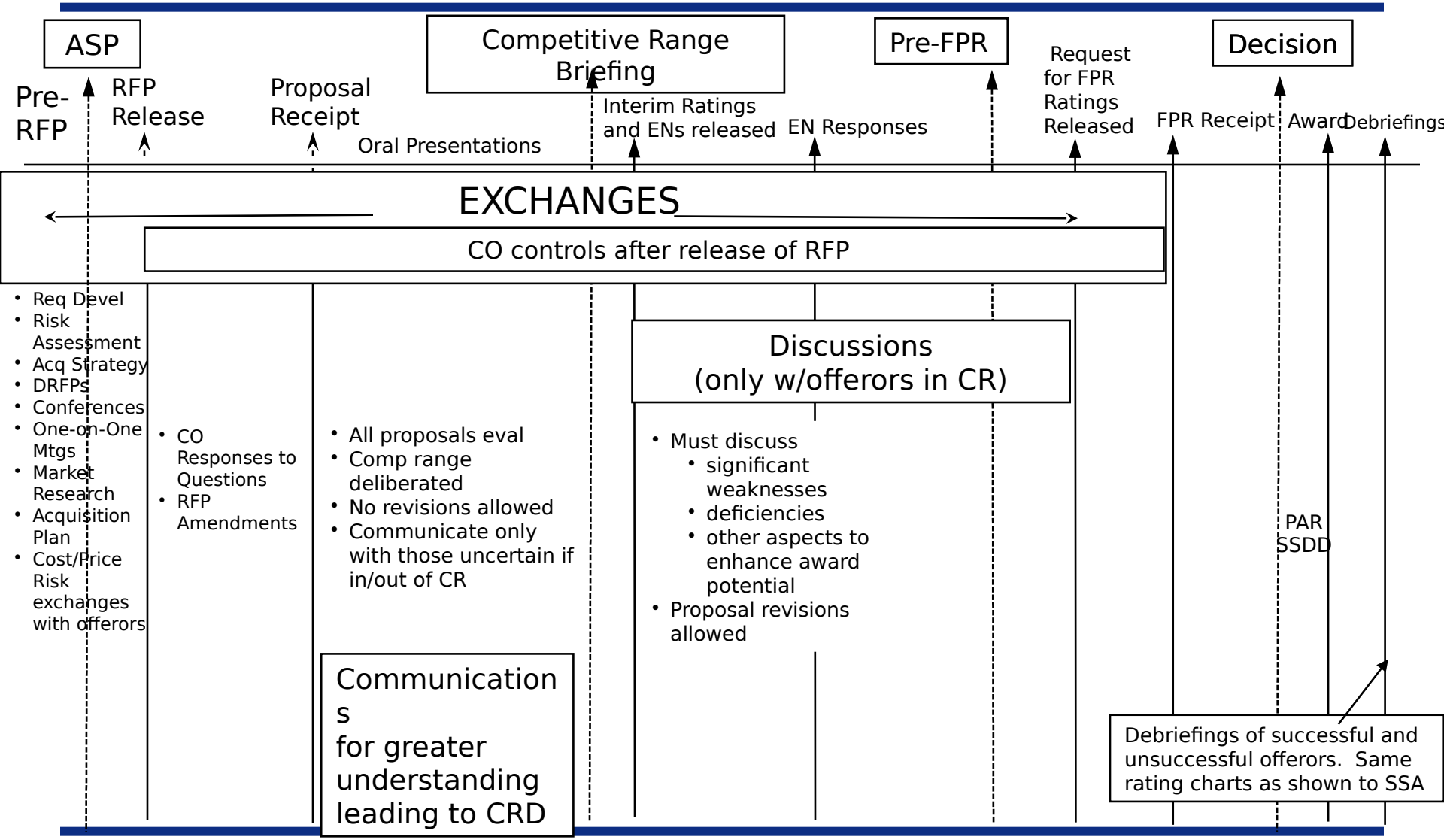

Past Performance Use in Source Selection

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- **Best Value Competitive Source Selection conducted in accordance with FAR Part 15**
- **FAR Subpart 15.304(c)3(i):**
  - **Past Performance shall be evaluated in all source selections for negotiated competitive acquisitions over $100,000**
  - **DoD Class Deviation 99-O0002 (January 29, 1999) the Thresholds are:**
    - Systems and Operations Support > $5,000,000
    - Services, information technology, science and technology > $1,000,000
    - Fuels or health care > $100,000
- **AFFARS Part 5315.3 “Source Selection”**
- **AFFARS Mandatory Procedure MP5315.3 “Source Selection”**

AF & DOD Guidance for PPI Use in Source Selection

- **AFFARS Informational Guidance, IG5315.305(a)(2), Past Performance Evaluation Guide (PPEG), dated July 2005**

- **DoD - "A Guide to Collection and Use of Past Performance Information", May 2003**

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Why Evaluate Past Performance?

- Validates Promises Made in Proposal
- Integral to Best Value Source Selection
- Incentivizes Contractors to Strive for Excellence
- Rewards Good Performance
- Reduces Risk and Oversight

Who Does PP Evaluation?

- **Performance Confidence Assessment Group (PCAG) for source selections > $100M**
- **PP evaluations for source selections < $100M may be PCAG or individual(s) identified in source selection plan**
  - **Performance Price Tradeoff (PPT)**
  - **Full Trade-Off Source Selection Procedures**
    - ($1M to $100M)

PCAG Roles & Responsibilities

- **PCAG is a group assigned to accomplish the Performance Confidence Assessment.**
- **Responsible for conducting the past performance evaluation through a review and analysis of the offeror's recent, current and relevant performance.**
- **Assigns or recommends to the SSA a performance confidence assessment after reviewing the offeror's demonstrated performance supplying products or services.**

PCAG Roles & Responsibilities

What is the Performance Confidence Assessment?

- **Measures the level of confidence the Government has in the offeror's ability to perform.**
- **Rating established through a review and analysis of the offeror's recent past performance, focusing on performance that is relevant.**

Past Performance Versus Responsibility Determination

Responsibility Determination

- **Does the offeror have the capability to perform?**
- **Can the offeror do the work?**
  - **Preaward surveys and pass/fail provide a yes/no, pass/fail or go/no-go answer**
  - **PCO determines whether offeror is responsible**

PP Versus Responsibility Determination

Past Performance Evaluation

- **Identifies the degree of confidence associated with each competing offeror**
- **Will the offeror do the work successfully?**
- **Evaluation describes the degree of confidence the Government has that the offeror will succeed**
  - **Based on the quality of recent, relevant performance**

Past Performance Activities

I. Early Activities

II. Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

III. Prior To Proposal Receipt

IV. After Receipt of Proposals

Early Activities – PCAG Chairperson

- Appointed by SSET chairperson
- Key participant in the acquisition planning process
- Early participation ensures chairperson knows requirements, understands strategy, and provides input to factors/subfactors
- Desired attributes
  - Broad experience in acquisitions similar to instant acquisition
  - APDP Level II certified
  - Previously served on a PCAG

Early Activities – PCAG Members

- Appointed by SSET chairperson
- Number of members depends on complexity of the acquisition and number of proposals expected
- Members should be experienced personnel, familiar with work required by the acquisition
- Members should include a person(s) who will have to live with the results of the source selection
- A technical expert may be assigned
- Consider a member from DCMA

Early Activities

During early phase of acquisition

- **Begin discussing relevancy and recency**
- **Begin drafting questionnaire**
- **Discuss management processes for the source selection**
  - **Handling of information in the evaluation process**
  - **Data management process for tracking proposals, questionnaires, ENs, etc.**
  - **Secure work area with phones, fax machine and locking file cabinets**
  - **Dedicated resources and adequate administrative support**
- **Review latest past performance guidance**

Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

- **Prepare past performance portion of Sections L, M, and questionnaire**
  - **Establish clear relationship between acquisition documents**
    - Requirements set forth in SOO, SOW, PWS, or TRD
    - Factors and subfactors chosen for evaluation must track back to requirements
    - Sec L and M should clearly state what past performance information the Government requires in the proposal and how PP will be evaluated

Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

Consider including the following when developing PP portion of Section L and Attachments

- **Ask offerors for information on performance, such as a number of on-going contracts or contracts with performance completed not more than X years.**
  - **Keep number as small as possible to give accurate review of past performance**
  - **Recommend 5 to 10 from prime and 5 from each critical sub**
  - **Include PP information format as attachment to DRFP/RFP**

Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

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Section L Considerations, cont'd

- Encourage offerors to provide information on problems encountered during performance and corrective actions
- PP information of commercial, state and local government similar to these requirements will be evaluated
- PP information on subcontractors, teaming partners and joint ventures
- Government may use PP information obtained from other sources
- PP information is proprietary SS information therefore prime contractor must submit subcontractors consent

Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

Section L Considerations, cont'd

- Identify which efforts are relevant indicators of performance for factors/subfactors
- Page count limitation for PP volume or referenced fact sheets
  - Determine what to exclude from page count
- Prepare the draft questionnaire if offerors will send questionnaires to POCs
  - Attach the draft questionnaire to DRFP, if planning to include a questionnaire in the RFP
- If offerors are to send out questionnaires, Section L should include instructions and cover letter

Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

Section L Considerations, cont'd

- Consider what kind of past performance information is needed to evaluate offeror's team members including joint ventures and subcontractors

- Decide if past performance volume will be required earlier than proposal

Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

Consider the following when developing PP portion of Section M

- **Normally the past performance factor should be a significant evaluation criterion**
- **Government will assign a performance confidence assessment to the past performance factor IAW AFFARS MP5315.3, paragraph 5.5.2**

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Performance Confidence Assessments

Substantial Confidence	**Based on the offeror's performance record, the government has a high expectation that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort.**
Satisfactory Confidence	**Based on the offeror's performance record, the government has an expectation that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort.**
Limited Confidence	**Based on the offeror's performance record, the government has a low expectation that the offeror will successfully perform the required effort.**
No Confidence	**Based on the offeror's performance record, the government has no expectation that the offeror will be able to successfully perform the required effort.**
Unknown Confidence	**No performance record is identifiable or the offeror's performance record is so sparse that no confidence assessment rating can be reasonable assigned.**

Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

Section M Considerations, cont'd

- **State exactly how we will evaluate the proposals in Section M**
- **Recency length for PP must be stated in Section M**
  - **Consider product being acquired in determining how many years to go back in looking at past performance**
  - **Time should not be longer than 3 years except for unique items**
  - **Recency example: Each relevant contract shall have been performed during the past 3 years from the date of issuance of this solicitation**

Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

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Section M Considerations, cont'd

- **Relevancy definitions must be in DRFP/RFP**
  - **PCAG must determine how to define relevancy**
  - **Definitions may be varying degrees or single definition for relevancy**
    - Team must realize it can not evaluate more or less relevant performance on single definition
- **Consider the following when developing relevancy definition:**
  - **Relevant does not mean same or identical**
  - **Relevant means similar to instant acquisition to provide indicators of performance.**
    - Consider such things as product or service similarity, complexity, contract type, contract dollar value/size, program phase, division of company, major or critical subcontractors, teaming partners and joint ventures
  - **How will the PCAG determine relevancy for individual efforts?**
    - Prime, joint ventures, subcontractors

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Relevancy Example

Relevancy Definitions

Very Relevant	**Past/present performance effort involved essentially the same magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.**
Relevant	**Past/present performance effort involved much of the magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.**
Somewhat Relevant	**Past/present performance effort involved some of the magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.**
Not Relevant	**Past/present performance effort did not involve any of the magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.**

Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

Section M Considerations, cont'd

- Determine if more recent and more relevant performance will have greater impact on performance confidence assessment
- Define adverse past performance in Section M
  - Adverse PPI—PPI that supports a less than satisfactory rating on any evaluation element or any unfavorable comments received from sources without a formal rating system. (DoD Guide to Collection and Use of Past Performance Information, Appendix A.)
- Define how quality of performance will be rated
- PCAG may consider the offeror's past performance in aggregate, in addition to an effort-by-effort basis (e.g., contract)

Prior to Issuance of DRFP/RFP

Other PCAG Activities

- Early industry involvement is essential to resolve concerns
  - Relevancy and recency definitions
  - Questionnaire
  - Past performance evaluation
- Develop timelines for PP activities in SS
- Establish interchange process within SSET
- Plan on aggressively pursuing sources of information on potential offerors
  - CPARS, DCMA, DLA, PPIRS, Federal Procurement Data System, Dun and Bradstreet

Prior To Proposal Receipt

- **PCAG participates in activities with industry**
  - **Industry day, one-on-one meetings, or pre-proposal conferences**
- **Finalize PCAG internal processes**
  - **Internal team consensus process**
  - **Data management process**
  - **Formulate computer generated documents**
  - **Determine what each PCAG member will review/work**

Prior To Proposal Receipt

Finalize questionnaire if it was not attached to RFP

- **Questionnaire and cover letter will be issued soon after receipt of proposals--unless offeror sent out**
  - **Purpose of questionnaire is to obtain information on past and present performance**
  - **Structure questionnaire to obtain helpful information about the offeror's performance**
  - **Make questionnaire easy to complete but avoid yes/no answers**
  - **Questions should elicit information that relates to mission capability subfactors and price/cost factor**
  - **Questionnaire must define a scale for rating the quality of performance**

Prior To Proposal Receipt

- **DoD Assessment Rating System in Appendix F of DoD Guide**
  - **Exceptional (Dark Blue).** Performance meets contractual requirements and exceeds many to the Government's benefit. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being assessed was accomplished with few minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor were highly effective.
  - **Very Good (Purple).** Performance meets contractual requirements and exceeds some to the Government's benefit. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being assessed was accomplished with some minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor were effective.
  - **Satisfactory (Green).** Performance meets contractual requirements. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element contains some minor problems for which corrective actions taken by the contractor appear or were satisfactory.
  - **Marginal (Yellow).** Performance does not meet some contractual requirements. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element being assessed reflects a serious problem for which the contractor has not yet identified corrective actions. The contractor's proposed actions appear only marginally effective or were not fully implemented.
  - **Unsatisfactory (Red).** Performance does not meet most contractual requirements and recovery in a timely manner is not likely. The contractual performance of the element or sub-element contains serious problem(s) for

After Receipt of Proposals

- Reread entire RFP, especially Sections L and M
- Read Executive Summary and PP Volume
- Prepare list of offerors
- PCAG Chair should have meeting with SSET Chair

After Receipt of Proposals

Past Performance Evaluation

- **Step 1** Conduct recency and relevancy screening by validating recency and determining relevancy of each effort
- **Step 2** Search for additional relevant efforts
- **Step 3** Obtain Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS) data
- **Step 4** Issue, follow-up, review questionnaires Conduct and document interviews on completed questionnaires

After Receipt of Proposals

Past Performance Evaluation

- **Step 5 Rate quality of performance for each offeror and critical subcontractors and team partners**
  - **Rate performance on each relevant effort**
  - **Evaluate poor performance if necessary**
  - **Consolidate data for each offeror**
  - **Identify observations for past performance factor**
- **Step 6 Conduct site visits if beneficial to evaluation**

After Receipt of Proposals

Past Performance Evaluation

- **Step 7** Perform an assessment of performance confidence at factor or subfactor as stated in Section M
- **Step 8** Prepare ENs for adverse past performance information and other past performance issues
- **Step 9** Evaluate responses on ENs
- **Step 10** Review performance confidence assessments and observations based on additional information in response to ENs

After Receipt of Proposals

Past Performance Evaluation

- **Step 11 Assist other source selection team evaluators**
- **Step 12 Review documentation and verify PP evaluation completed IAW Section M**
- **Step 13 Prepare briefing charts for SSA/SSAC briefings**

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Summary of Ratings: ABC Company Inc.

COMPANY	PROJECT NAME	CITATION #	SF1		SF2		SF3		SF4		C/P	
			REL	PER	REL	PER	REL	PER	REL	PER	REL	PER
			VR	E	VR	S	VR	N	R	E	VR	E
			VR	S	VR	S	VR	E	NR		VR	S
			VR	VG	VR	VG	R	VG	NR		VR	S
			VR	VG	VR	VG	R	E	R	S	VR	VG
			VR	VG	VR	VG	VR	VG	R	E	VR	VG
			R	VG	VR	VG	VR	VG	R	E	VR	VG
			R	VG	VR	VG	VR	VG	R	S	VR	VG
			VR	E	VR	E	R	VG	R	E	VR	VG
			SR	E	VR	E	VR	S	NR		VR	E
			R	E	VR	S	R	S	NR		VR	VG
			SR	VG	VR	VG	VR	S	R	E	VR	VG
			R	VG	R	VG	SR	VG	NR	VG	VR	E
			VR	VG	R	VG	SR	S	VR	VG	VR	S
			VR	S	R	S	SR	E	VR	VG	VR	VG
			VR	E	R	VG	SR	VG	VR	S	SR	VG
			VR	VG	R	VG	SR	VG	VR	VG	VR	VG
			VR	E	R	VG	SR	VG	VR	VG	VR	S
			VR	VG	VR	S	SR	S	VR	VG	VR	VG
			VR	E	VR	E	SR	VG	VR	S	R	S
			VR	VG	VR	VG	VR	VG	VR	E	VR	E
			R	VG	VR	VG	VR	VG	VR	VG	VR	VG
			R	VG	R	VG	R	S	R	VG	VR	E
			SR	VG	R	S	VR	S	R	VG	VR	VG
			VR	S	R	VG	VR	S	R	S	VR	S
			VR	S	R	VG	VR	S	R	VG	R	S

VR=Very Relevant
R=Relevant
SR=Somewhat Relevant
NR=Not Relevant

E=Exceptional
VG=Very Good
S=Satisfactory

Sample Source Selection Briefing Charts

Past Performance

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	Prime		Sf 1		Sf 2		Sf 3		Sf 4		Sf 5		Sf 6		Cost		
	Contract		R	E	NR	N	VR	E	R	E	R	E	R	S	FFP+	$10.1M	VR
	Contract		VR	VG	SR	VG	VR	VG	VR	VG	VR	VG	R	E	FFP/IF/AF	$27M	VR
	Contract		R	E	NR	N	VR	E	R	E	R	E	R	E	FFP/AF	$19.9M	VR
	Contract		R	E	NR	N	VR	E	VR	E	R	VG	R	E	FFP/IF/AF	$23M	VR
	Contract		SR	E	R	E	NR	N	R	E	SR	E	R	VG	CPAF/AT	$4.2M	SR
	Contract		R	VG	SR	VG	NR	N	NR	N	R	VG	R	E	CPIF	$22M	R
	Contract		R	VG	NR	N	R	VG	R	VG	R	S	R	VG	FFP	$2.3M	SR
	Contract		R	E	NR	N	VR	E	R	E	R	E	R	S	CPAF	$40M	R
	Contract		R	E	SR	E	NR	N	VR	E	R	E	R	S	CPAF & FFP	$17.3M	R
	Contract		R	E	SR	E	NR	N	NR	N	R	E	R	S	CPIF	$57M	R
	Subcontractor																
	Contract		R	E	NR	N	VR	E	R	VG	R	E	NR	N	FFP	$5.4M	VR
	Contract		R	VG	NR	N	VR	VG	R	E	R	VG	NR	N	FFP	$9M	VR
	Contract		SR	E	NR	N	R	E	R	E	SR	E	NR	N	FFP	$2.5M	VR
	Contract		R	VG	SR	S	VR	VG	R	S	R	VG	NR	N	FFP	$2.6M	VR
	Contract		SR	E	SR	N	NR	N	NR	N	NR	N	NR	N	FFP	$2.6M	VR
	Subcontractor																
	Contract		NR	N	SR	E	NR	N	NR	N	NR	N	NR	N	FFP	$130K	SR
	Contract		NR	N	SR	E	NR	N	NR	N	NR	N	NR	N	FFP	$313K	SR
	Contract		NR	N	SR	E	NR	N	NR	N	NR	N	NR	N	FFP	$66K	SR

VR=Very Relevant
R=Relevant
SR=Somewhat Relevant
NR=Not Relevant

E=Exceptional
VG=Very Good
S=Satisfactory
M=Marginal
U=Unsatisfactory

After Receipt of Proposals

Other Activities for the PCAG Chairperson

- Read/review proposals, questionnaires and all PCAG member assessments to provide an integrated assessment
- Remember more not less PP information is goal of the PCAG
- Ensure consistent, complete and auditable rationale, fair/impartial judgment, compliance with all RFP terms/conditions, and an error free process
- Brief the PCAG findings as a part of SSET to SSAC and SSA
- Keep process on timeline schedule
- Brief, or support, discussions with offerors if conducted
- Continue to participate in interchange meetings

After Receipt of Proposals

Exchanges with Offerors

- Clarifications are limited exchanges when award without discussions is contemplated
  - Past Performance issues on adverse past performance and past performance information relevance may be Clarification ENs
- Communications are exchanges leading to establishment of competitive range
- Discussions are negotiations conducted after the competitive range
  - Offeror is allowed to revise proposal
- ENs are used for these exchanges

After Receipt of Proposal Revisions

- PCAG must analyze any change to proposal addressing past performance and reassess positive and negative performance indicators for each offeror
- PCAG drafts its portion of the Proposal Analysis Report (PAR)
- PCAG prepares charts for the final decision briefing
- PCAG members may participate in the de-briefings

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Conclusion

- **Past performance is important in source selections**
- **RFP Sections L and M must clearly state requirements for proposals and how evaluation will be conducted**
- **Past performance team must strive for more performance data than submitted by offerors in doing past performance evaluation**
- **PP evaluation must be done IAW Section M**

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Questions or Feedback?

- **Questions?**
- **Feedback?**
  - **Please complete the Feedback Sheet before you leave.**
  - **The training modules will be reviewed/updated periodically based on your inputs**

BACKUP CHARTS

Headquarters U.S. Air Force

Integrity - Service - Excellence

PERFORMANCE CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT GROUP (PCAG)

Initial Past Performance Briefing

Mr xxx

PCAG Chairman

DATE

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Performance Rating Process

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- Obtain Past Performance Information on Each Offeror
- Assess Contract Recency for Each Mission Capability Subfactor
- Assess Contract Relevancy for Each Mission Capability Subfactor
- Assess Contract Performance for Each MC Subfactor
- Review Relevancy and Performance Ratings
- Assign PAST PERFORMANCE FACTOR Confidence Rating

Process Flow

RELEVANCY

By Mission Capability Subfactor and Cost Factor

How Relevant is this Contract to the requirements ?

Contracts For PCAG Review

PerformanceQuality

By MC Subfactor & Cost Factor

Requirements
Subfactor 1
Subfactor 2
Subfactor 3
Subfactor 4
Cost/Price

Subfactor 1

Contract A	= HR	E =	Contract A
Contract B	= SR	S =	Contract B
Contract C	= R	VG =	Contract C
Contract D	= SR	VG =	Contract D
Contract E	= R	VG =	Contract E

Performance Confidence Assessment:

Substantial Confidence

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Sources of Data

- Past Performance Volumes
- Questionnaires
- Telephone Interviews
- CPARs via the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS)
- Site Visits
- Federal Procurement Data System (DD350 Database)
- Central Contractor Registration Program
- Dunn and Bradstreet

Offeror XXX

Contracts Reviewed:	**6**
Questionnaires Sent:	**16**
Questionnaires Received:	**15**
CPARS Reviewed:	**3**
Interviews Conducted:	**9**

Prime :	**Offeror A**	**(60%)**
Subs:	**Sub - x**	**(25%)**
	Sub - y	**(15%)**

Offeror A Past Performance Mission Capability Subfactor 1

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Prime

Relevancy	#	K	M	Sat	VG	E
HR	0					
R	3				2	1
SR	1			1		
NR	0					

Subcontractor

Relevancy	#	K	M	Sat	VG	E
HR	0					
R	1			1		
SR	0					
NR	0					

Observations :

Prime

Strong Point: CPARS - Very responsive management (Program A and B)

Etc….

Subcontractors

Strong Point: QUESTIONNAIRES - Excellent responsiveness & systems engineering processes (Program F)

Offeror A Past Performance
Mission Capability Subfactor 2

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Prime

Relevancy	# K	M	Sat	VG	E
HR	3			1	2
R	1			1	
SR	0				
NR	0				

Subcontractor

Relevancy	# K	M	Sat	VG	E
HR	0				
R	2			1	1
SR	0				
NR	0				

Observations :

Prime

Strong Point: CPARS - Outstanding risk assessment process (Program A and C)

Etc….

Subcontractors

Weak Point: QUESTIONNAIRES - Management of key subcontractors – inadequate (Program E)

Offeror A Past Performance
Mission Capability Subfactor 3

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Prime

Relevancy	#	K	M	Sat	VG	E
HR	3					3
R	0					
SR	0					
NR	0					

Subcontractor

Relevancy	#	K	M	Sat	VG	E
HR	0					
R	2			1		1
SR	0					
NR	0					

Observations :

Prime

Strong Point: CPARS – Very accurate estimates on test & delivery schedules (Program A and B)

Etc….

Subcontractors

Strong Point: QUESTIONNAIRES - Well documented and executed test program (Program F)

Offeror A Past Performance Cost/Price Factor

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Prime

Relevancy	#	K	M	Sat	VG	E
HR	3				2	1
R	1				1	
SR	0					
NR	0					

Subcontractor

Relevancy	#	K	M	Sat	VG	E
HR	0					
R	0					
SR	0					
NR	0					

Observations :

Prime

- **Strong Point: CPARS – Consistently within cost estimates (program A)**
- **Etc…**

Subcontractors

- **None**

PCAG Evaluation Summary

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Offeror A
Evaluation Summary

Program	Subfactor 1		Subfactor 2		Subfactor 3		Cost/Price	
	Relev.	Rating	Relev.	Rating	Relev.	Rating	Relev.	Rating
Contract A	R	E	HR	E	HR	E	HR	E
Contract B	R	VG	HR	VG	HR	E	HR	VG
Contract C	SR	M	HR	E	NR	N/A	R	VG
Contract D	R	VG	R	VG	HR	E	HR	VG
Contract E	NR	N/A	R	E	R	E	NR	N/A
Contract F	R	S	R	VG	R	S	NR	N/A

PAST PERFORMANCE FACTOR
Substantial Confidence

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Offeror A Factor Summary

KEY OBSERVATIONS from Most Relevant Contracts :

PRIME

Strong Point: CPARS - Very responsive management (Program A & B)

Strong Point: CPAR - Outstanding risk assessment process (Programs A & C)

SUBCONTRACTORS

Strong Point: QUESTIONNAIRES - Excellent responsiveness & systems engineering processes (Program F)

Weak Point: QUESTIONNAIRES - Management of key subcontractors - inadequate (Program E)

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Offeror XX

PAST PERFORMANCE FACTOR

SUBSTANTIAL CONFIDENCE

Attachment

Conducting Telephone Interviews

from

DoD "A Guide to Collection and Use of Past Performance Information", Appendix G: Collection of PPI During Source Selection

Conducting Telephone Interviews

Following the screening of previous contracts for further in-depth review, the evaluation group should send questionnaires and/or initiate telephone calls to the identified references for those efforts. The interviewing and reporting of results are usually individual efforts conducted by each evaluation group member. However, it is sometimes helpful to collect information as a group through the use of conference calls.

At least two references should be contacted on each previous contract effort selected for in-depth review. The current or previous Contracting Officer, Program Manager, and Contracting Officer's Representative—whoever has the most relevant experience on the contract—often proves to be an excellent source of information. Additional references are often identified during the interviews. Maximum effectiveness occurs when the expertise of the evaluation group interviewer matches that of the reference.

Prior to initiating a telephone interview, a group member should gather all avail specific effort and draft a list of questions. There may be a common group of questions for all offerors and/or tailored questions for each offeror, depending upon the circumstances. These questions can either be sent as questionnaires to each reference or be used by the group member during the telephone interview.

Conducting Telephone Interviews

At the start of each telephone interview, the group member should explain the purpose of the call and request voluntary assistance from the reference. The interviewer should explain that he or she will document the results of the conversation and send a copy of the memorandum to the reference for verification. There is usually no need to divulge the solicitation number, program description, or other identifying information to the reference. If it is necessary to do so, a nondisclosure statement must be obtained.

In most instances the reference will willingly provide the information requested. In those rare cases when the reference is reluctant to participate, the interviewer should assure the reference of anonymity. At the least, the reference should be requested to provide additional references.

It is important to pursue and document the underlying facts supporting any concluding statements received on a contractor. The evaluation group member can determine neither the magnitude of a reported problem nor its possible impact on the current risk assessment without first understanding the details surrounding the problem.

Conducting Telephone Interviews

Documenting Telephone Interviews

Immediately following a telephone interview, the interviewer must prepare a narrative summary of the conversation and send it to the reference for verification. E-mail and datafax transmissions are encouraged. The following step is extremely important. Extra care must be taken to ensure accuracy, clarity, and legibility because these summaries often represent the only written back-up supporting the opinions and conclusions of the final evaluation report. In order to maintain accurate records and facilitate verification, the telephone record form should include the reference's name, full mailing and electronic addresses, telephone number, the date and time of the call, and the description of the contract effort discussed.

The evaluation group member should send the telephone memorandum to the reference, stating explicitly that if the reference does not object to its content within the time specified, it will be accepted as correct. The amount of time allowed for a response depends on the circumstances of each acquisition. Note that the reference need not sign a nondisclosure form if the group member withholds the identity of the program and solicitation number. If the reference indicates that the narrative is incorrect, then a corrected narrative must be sent for verification. Experience indicates that in most instances, changes are minor. If, however, a reference expresses opposition to a record and satisfactory corrections cannot be agreed upon, the evaluation group should not rely on that record.